

*Les Gancy*

SIGHTLESS MAN BECOMES POLICE  
RADIO OPERATOR



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HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

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Although Leo Yancy of Sullivan, Ill., lost his eyesight eight years ago when he was 46 years old, he was far too energetic to allow it to stand in the way of a career or two.

An account about Mr. Yancy's determination written by Mrs. Jane Krows, *Decatur Herald & Review* staff member, was published recently in that newspaper.

After he became blind, Mr. Yancy carried on for several years at his job as a local movie theater projectionist and later took his enthusiasm with him into a brand-new job as night radio operator for the Moultrie county sheriff's office. It's not only that Mr. Yancy finds his new task interesting. He feels that he is being of service to the public as well.

Since its beginning, he has been interested in radio broadcasting and operation as a hobby and after losing his sight, spent more time with his hobby until he had developed his abilities and became an experienced, licensed operator.

Before the war interrupted him, he operated a short wave amateur station at home and with the return of peace, resumed his "ham" radio work, making many friends over the air waves and talking to people in many parts of the world.

Prior to installation of the county police radio, Mr. Yancy continued as projectionist at the theater even after losing his sight. His wife assisted him. In his new job, he is pleased because he is able to handle all of its phases himself.

However, he still services sound equipment for several motion picture houses in the Sullivan area and also repairs radio sets. In this, he requires some member of the family to read the testing meter for him in his home radio shop.

As operator of the police radio, he has two-way communication with the sheriff's and police cars. He handles telephone calls to the sheriff's office in the evening and calls an officer whenever necessary. This station also is in direct communication with state police.

Since his work necessitates filling out reports, Mr. Yancy uses the touch system on a standard typewriter. He has worked out a method of filling out blanks in report forms by pinching fine creases at the proper places to be filled out. Thus, by feeling with his finger, he can locate the horizontal line to be followed in

typing. Vertical locations are found by means of touch and the indicators on the machine.

Mr. Yancy has devised an almost complete telephone directory in braille for himself, claiming the ability to write in this medium is easily acquired. Monthly, he makes out a new braille calendar for his own use. He is aided in this by a braille typewriter presented to him by the Sullivan Lions club.

He speaks highly of the instructor who in the last two years has taught him to read and write braille—W. R. "Bill" Mills of Decatur, Illinois Department of Public Welfare teacher for the blind.

Mr. Mills also is blind and has developed many abilities which his student admires. The instructor accomplishes a number of types of handicraft, but his principal hobby is working in his well-equipped home machine shop.

But Mr. Yancy is modest about his own abilities and says that he has only started. He calls attention to the many persons with a like affliction who are doing more than he and have developed the use of their hands to greater efficiency. Especially, he wants to encourage other blind persons to make the most of their opportunities.

He suggests that they make use of the Illinois Public Aid Commission's offices in their communities where they will find capable and co-operative personnel who will place them in touch with the home teaching service. Emphasizing that age is no factor, he points out that he began the study of braille when he was past 50.

Grateful to Sheriff Glenn Braden and the Moultrie county board of supervisors for giving him the chance to turn his radio hobby into a means of livelihood, he suggests that other employers consider the use of the blind in their businesses.

"I believe," said he, "that a blind person is often more deft with the use of his hands than one with perfect sight."

Mr. Yancy has resided in Sullivan for the last 16 years. He is the father of two daughters and a son: Mrs. Woodrow Spaug and Ralph Yancy of Sullivan, and Mrs. Thomas Anderson of California. He speaks with pride of his three grandchildren, Ann and Vicky Yancy of Sullivan and baby Charles of California.

(Continued from Page 17)

maximum of \$2,400. For work on hazardous and arduous wards an additional 7½ per cent is provided and about 50 per cent of the wards fall into this category. On disturbed wards, four or more attendants are on duty by day.

Shifts are of eight hours' duration. The first works from 7 a. m. to 4 p. m., with half an hour off for meals. This shift has two meals. The next works from 4 p. m. to 12:30 a. m. These have one meal. The night shift is on duty from 12:30 a. m. to 9 a. m., having half an hour for breakfast.

It will be noted that there is an over-lapping of the night shift with the morning shift which increases the aggregate number of employees on the wards in the early morning hours when patients must be gotten up and served breakfast. We feel that this is a very good arrangement.

Attendants receive a short in-training course which apparently consists chiefly of lectures, and demonstrations over a period of 24 hours of instruction. Dr. Bellinger said that training is given dietary employees at one institution in the state and that other institutions may send their employees there to attend. They have 23 social workers and contemplate a training course of employees of this classification.

Surgery of all types is performed by a visiting consultant staff. Lobotomies apparently are done on most of the indicated cases. They feel that most of them show improvement, but it is doubtful that the percentage of complete recovery is very high.

We gained the impression that shock therapy, both electro and insulin, was used extensively. Dr. Bellinger was proud of all the treatment provided for the patients and apparently this was a large factor in their large turn-over of patients.

They are receiving many senile and other aged patients and regard this as a very definite problem since these usually remain in the institution until they die or are transferred to other state hospitals. They consider their death rate rather high because of the large number of aged patients.

We did not see any actual meals served, but were informed that many stews and ground meat dishes were utilized. In some of the wards, trays were being set up, but we could observe only a single china bowl on each tray.

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Nearly 3,000 war veterans are patients in Illinois Department of Public Welfare institutions.



**THERAPISTS CONVENE**—Speakers table and part of crowd at statewide therapy institute dinner at Jacksonville State Hospital. At speakers table, left to right: Dr. Joseph S. Drabanski, Chicago State Hospital superintendent; Dr. William W. Fox, Lincoln State School & Colony superintendent; Dr. Richard J. Graff, Peoria State Hospital superintendent; Dr. Paul L. Schroeder, Institute for Juvenile Research superintendent; Dr. George A. Wiltrakis, deputy director, medical and surgical service; Gen. Cassius Poust, department director; Miss Bertha E. Schlotter, supervisor, occupational and recreational therapy; Dr. James L. Smith, Jacksonville State Hospital superintendent.

## ATTENDANCE STATEWIDE AT THERAPY SESSIONS

About 200 persons, comprising personnel from Illinois Department of Public Welfare institutions, including mental, educational and correctional schools throughout the state, attended a two-day therapy institute at Jacksonville State Hospital.

Sessions opened with addresses by Dr. James L. Smith, Jacksonville hospital superintendent; Dr. Richard J. Graff, Peoria State Hospital superintendent; Miss Beatrice Wade, director of the occupational therapy school, University of Illinois; Miss Neva L. Boyd, former professor of group work at Northwestern University; Miss Ruth Austin, former head resident at Gadshill Community Center, Chicago; and Dr. Arthur J. Gavigan, clinical director, Alton State Hospital.

Three groups of round-table discussions took place with topics relating to work carried on by the therapists.

Gen. Cassius Poust, welfare department director, and other department officials spoke at a dinner meeting. A demonstration of arts and crafts was presented by Miss Bernice Magnie, Chicago, and Mrs. Georgine Theiss, also of Chicago, demonstrated pantomime and tableaux instruction.

Occupational therapists and recreation workers set up work shops to show various skills and forms of recreation being used in the institutions. Aside from learning these activities, workers also learned how to apply them in their own particular fields.

Besides the occupational therapists

and recreational workers, psychiatrists and superintendents from various institutions attended.

## THE MILKY WAY . . .

Alton State Hospital has been awarded an Honor Roll diploma by the National Dairy Association in recognition of the institution herd's high rate of butterfat production.

In sending the award to Dr. Abraham Simon, hospital superintendent, J. L. Bundy, superintendent of the State Department of Agriculture's division of institutional farms, wrote:

"Enclosed is a National Dairy Association Honor Roll diploma. This is presented to your institution as a reward for a notable achievement in butterfat production. Results such as these are not obtained by ordinary care and management.

"Please accept my congratulations to you and your associates for this achievement."

Peoria State Hospital's Award of Merit from the Peoria city health department for the institution's production of "high quality milk under excellent sanitary conditions," (WELFARE BULLETIN, September, 1947), netted the hospital congratulations from the Illinois Department of Agriculture.

Supt. Zean Gassman of the department's foods and dairies division, praised the accomplishment in a letter to Dr. R. J. Graff, Peoria State Hospital, superintendent.



**APRONS AND TEA TOWELS**—These were items popular with customers at the annual bazaar at the Illinois Training School for Girls at Geneva. In charge of this section was Mrs. Corressie Barnes, academic grade school teacher at the institution, and also a member of the bazaar committee.



